

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF FINNISH HIGHER EDUCATION

A Literature Review on the Living Scenarios and Employability of International
Students in Finland

Suraj Chand

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Thesis, Fall/ Autumn 2014

Diaconia University of Applied Sciences

Degree Programme in Social Services

Bachelor of Social Services (UAP)

ABSTRACT

Suraj Chand. Internationalization of Finnish Higher Education System in Relation with International students' well-being and employment challenges. Diak South, Helsinki Finland. Autum 2014. 47 Pages.

Diaconia University of Applied Sciences. Degree Programme in Social Services and Community Development. Degree: Bachelor of Social Services.

This study discusses about the strategy for the internationalization of Finnish higher education institutions in relation with international students' living scenarios and employability. It further examines the 'Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education Institution in Finland 2009-2015.'

This research was conducted by finding the literature about internationalization of Finnish Higher Education system and international students' living and employment challenges in Finland. A literature review was used in order to collect data from various resources; books and journals, government publications and official statistics, website pages and the internet.

The findings of this study shows: although strategy for the internationalization of higher education institutions has been implemented, the international students' living and their employment related challenges have been neglected. It is unearthed from this research that language has remained a key factor for international students' vulnerability.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In this modern era, it is evident that globalization seems to be one of the primary reasons for people migrating from one place to another and the world is being more interconnected than ever before. Millions of people move usually from developing regions to the developed regions mainly to improve their economic prospects, amongst other reasons. According to United Nations (UN), some 232 million international migrants are living in the world today (United Nations). Therefore, migration in today's world is an on-going process and also a never-ending one as well. The reasons for movement across borders could be many but one amongst them all is the rapid movement of students all over the world. As mentioned in the International students Migration Fact sheet, World Education Services (WES), the international student migration trends indicate that the numbers of foreign students from the year 2000 to 2008 have doubled from 1.8 million to 3.3 million and it is expected that between 4.1 million and 6.7 million students will be studying abroad by 2020. (World Education Service 2010.)

Economic growth varies according to the resources available within any societies or regions, as agricultural societies depend mainly on land for the economic prosperity, the industrial economies depend on their skills in production and knowledge based economies rely on the skills, knowledge, and experience possessed by individuals that are determined as assets to the country. (N.V.Varghese 2008.) Chen and Dahlman (2004), commented that the knowledge economies rely on their reach and ability to sustain the enhancement of knowledge and serve as pillars of growth. In reality, growth in production and the rise of economies are linked to the functioning of the knowledge-related sectors. In this current era, knowledge is exceeding regional boundaries at a quicker pace than wealth and people and instead is a worldwide commodity to be merchandized in the international market. (Cited in Varghese 2008.)

Therefore, due to globalization there is a higher need for the universities and the educational institutions to adhere to the market needs and competence. This means attracting international students to pursue higher education to their countries is a profit making business, which brings along assets from abroad like human capital in the form

of workers and competitive individuals which in the long run help in boosting the economy of the host country. According to Organisation for Economic co-operation and Development (OECD) in its report Education Indicators in Focus, the students registered in tertiary education and studying outside their country of birth increased to more than three times from 1.3 million in 1990 to almost 4.3 million in 2011, which signifies an average yearly growth rate of about 6 percent. This is a huge rise than the entire increase in tertiary enrolments worldwide. (Education Indicators in Focus 2013.)

Similarly, there has been a trend of international students arriving in Finland each year. The reason being, Finland's long lasting success strategy is based on investing in the education sector and able to maintain its efficiency. Assessments have shown that the high quality education and research system provides great strength and competitive edge. Educated workforce plays a vital role while competing in the market position and capital markets. Hence, creating new knowledge and skills in its implementation is seen as the upcoming accomplishments. (Ministry of Education 2009.) Hence, more focus has been laid on the internationalisation of the Finnish higher education institutions (HEI's) in order to welcome the international students and also provide them with a supporting environment to work and live in.

In favour of supporting the internationalisation of the Finnish HEI's, the Ministry of Education has drafted a strategy for the internationalisation of higher education in Finland. Furthermore, as one of the important aspects of the internationalization process is the involvement of the international students pursuing their higher education in Finnish universities of Applied Sciences and the Universities; thus, it is of critical importance to shed light on the life situations of the international students living in Finland.

Therefore, as an international student, in Finland, it felt important to reflect on the living and employability scenarios of international students, which may not have been considered whilst, the implementation of the internationalisation strategy.

So, in my theses, I will be conducting a literature review of the books and journals, government publications and official statistics, website pages and the internet, regarding the international students living situations and challenges confronted in the employability of the international students living in Finland.

2 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to provide literature review on the international students' living scenarios and employability in the Finnish labour market since 2009, the year Finland initiated the strategy for the internationalization of higher education institutions in Finland.

As per "The Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009–2015" there are insufficient foreign students, researchers and teachers in Finland and nor is there a lot in the field of research or developing fund. With evidence of a fall in the movement of students and researchers there is a need to increase foreign students and teachers as one of the objectives of the internationalization strategy. The Ministry of Education and Culture strategy paper therefore includes policies to increase the number of international students up to 20,000 by the year 2015, which is an increase of 85 percent as compared to the year 2007. (Ministry of Education 2009.)

Therefore, as measures are undertaken by the Finnish HEI's to support the internationalization process, the study primarily emphasizes on providing information on the international student's practical life situations as well as their struggles faced in the labour market. By living scenarios, I refer to the general occurrences during the daily life practicalities ranging from emotional well-being to the daily life challenges. Also it includes the theories of internationalization of higher education and the Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009–2015.

The study consists on gathering information on the International students' facing challenges while they are living and working in Finland. This study adds literature for novice researchers, and teachers who are teaching in internationally affiliated environment in Finland affiliated with several universities and for the policy makers handling immigrant issues.

However, the study is focused at mainly the teachers of DIAK, who further intend to write a book regarding the challenges faced by international students and their adaptations into the Finnish society and the Finnish job market. Hence the information and literature provided by this study will be a source for the development of the book to be published in the near future.

In this research, the subjective position as an immigrant student is the main reason behind exploring out the challenges of international students living in Finland. I have read articles about challenging scenarios of international students in Finland. Moreover, I had similar experience and witnessed the same among my university immigrant friends and colleagues. Hence, I wanted to have an in-depth understanding about it from this research. The next reason behind doing this research is to provide a new valid source of information among the applicants, who wish to fulfil their higher education in Finland.

3 INTERNATIONALIZATION IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

Internationalization is not a new phenomenon as previous scholars travelled throughout Europe and in this modern world where the high-tech tools and advanced knowledge of global communication and alertness are considered as the main possessions. Due to the on-going labour market there is a need for students to have international, foreign communications and intercultural abilities to interrelate worldwide and therefore, institutions are focusing more importance on internationalization.

Bruch and Barty (1998), write that Internationalization in the Higher Education in the present context is not a new occurrence as travelling to places has been an aspect in education for centuries, ever since ‘wondering scholars’ ventured from place to place to expand their knowledge (Cited in Montgomery 2010). As mentioned by Davies, Weko, Kim, & Thulstrup (2009), the higher education internationalization strategy aiming to increase the number of international students is required as to satisfy the rapidly growing labour market needs with an increased input of foreign talent. (Cited in Shumilova; Cai & Pekkola 2012.)

As stated by Carswell (2011), the highest number of international students obtained higher education in the United States in compared to any other country and contributing valuably in doing so. Similarly, governments use higher education to advance diplomatic, economic and other objectives and employ, multiple approaches to attract international students. For example, According to Australian authorities’ internationalization of higher education helps in attaining economic goals and also in developing diplomatic relationship with the different countries. Australians believed that exchange students were the main present day means of introducing the country to the outside world and in linking it with the different foreign nations as well. (Carswell 2011.)

The Chinese invite international students in order to promote cultural, scientific and technological exchanges between the East and West and to solidify friendship and endorse modernization amongst other nations.

Germany attracts international students to enhance its University recognition by endorsing the academic, economic and democratic development of developing countries. United Kingdoms' education provides in building a high- skilled workforce and in opening doors for trade and investment. The European Union aims at encouraging intercultural understanding through cooperation with other non- European nations. (Carswell 2011.)

The United States federal government, through its higher education executes both diplomatic and country development goals by approaching students in developing countries and providing the tools to support and benefit in the United States itself. Besides the fact that the U.S. has through the times relied on international students to fulfil important positions in the field of science, math, engineering and technology. Also, that the international students contribute largely in the U.S. economy as well. (Carswell 2011.)

According to Zha Quiang (2003), there are two widely known opinions about the factors leading to internationalization. Education and skilled prerequisite for graduates to tackle the needs of the globalization of communities and international labour markets are high and therefore higher education needs to be sufficiently equipped and prepared for that. Along with the educational and skilled knowledge there also needs to be an inclusion of several languages and diverse social and cultural skills and approaches. Secondly, two advancements in the international higher education that are highly influential are the hiring of international students which act as major factors for generating income for the institute and of the nation as well. Moreover, the modern communication technologies in disseminating knowledge with the involvement of private firms too, suggests that the function of the state government has become indistinct.(Quiang 2003.)

The above-mentioned statement reveals that higher education is a genuine part of the globalization process where students are crossing borders to meet the market demands. This leads to a lengthy meaning of the word "Internationalization" that summons up the complete operation of higher education rather than just the agents and factors causing it.

Furthermore, Quiang clarifies:

A countries unique history, indigenous culture (s), resources, priorities, etc. shape its response to and relationships with other countries. Thus national identity and culture are keys to internationalization of higher education.” (Quiang 2003.)

Similarly, Knight and de Wit (1997) claim that internationalization has not been coined as a simple term, instead it includes many features in order to endorse an atmosphere, which truly takes into account the global standpoint into the entire university (cited in Montgomery 1993). Hence, internationalization is a dynamic process rather than a set of individual actions supporting the agents of the internationalization and the sole purpose of the higher education institutions focus on mainly: teaching, research and service to the communities.

Wende (1997) claims internationalization as not only an aim but also a way to achieve larger goals; for instance, improvement of the quality in the structure and up-gradation of higher education systems and services. He further defines, internationalization as:

any systematic, sustained efforts aimed at making higher education responsive to the requirements and challenges related to the globalization of societies, economy and labour markets' (Cited in Montgomery 1993).

3.1 Internationalization Practices

Over the years, writers have made use of certain 'approaches' towards the working ways on promoting and implementation of strategies focused at internationalization, such as: 'The Activity Approach', where priorities aimed at endorsing actions focusing on the curriculum of the studies, student and staff exchange, technical assistance and the international students. During 1970's and early 1980's, this approach was coined in the international education sector, when it was described on the basis of specific activities or programs.

However, on viewing the international scale as a set of activities, they are likely to be measured as clear-cut strategies in accordance to their functions. Furthermore, this usually points towards a dismantled and disorganized approach in which the connection, effect and advantages within and among the activities are not taken into careful thought. (Quiang 2003.)

‘The Competency Approach’ is another approach, which pays attention into the developments of skills, understanding attitudes, and focuses on increasing students and staff members. The main emphasis of this approach is how the production and sharing of information assist in the progressing of capabilities within the workforce of the higher education organizations in order to become globally well informed and intercultural efficient. Additionally, within this process there is not only the advancement of the curriculum and activities but also proceeds towards enhancing the desirable skills in the students and staff members. As there is the continued desire in the competency approach, there is a larger focus concerning to the global demands of labour markets. And, there is still more requisite in the applied research to locate the desired skills that favour students to be prosperous native and global citizens contributing locally and to the global working force. (Quiang 2003.)

‘The Ethos Approach’ is a third approach that looks into the provision of supporting the cultural values and environments that assist in the international and diverse views and capabilities. In this approach, there is more attention paid on developing institutional theories that aim to produce a certain cultural and environment within an organization that is conducive to a specific agreed principles and goals. This approach recognizes that international component is a core to the description of a university or any other higher educational institutions and accepts that in the absence of a strong diverse culture support mechanism, the aspect of internalization will be hindered. (Quiang 2003.)

‘The Process Approach’ emphasises on the unification and combination of multicultural aspect into teaching, research and delivering services by creating activities, forming policies and regulations.

The main focus of the process approach is to look into the long-term support of the internationalization process. Hence, the importance is given to the regulations of the plans and policies drafted by the organizing authorities responsible for drafting the strategies.

3.2 Rationales for Internationalization

Apart from defining internationalization, it is also important to look into the motives behind acquiring internationalization. According to Aigner et al. (1992), states that there are three prominent reasons for internationalization of higher education, which are as such the interest in the international security, maintenance of economic competitiveness and fostering of human understanding across nations (cited in Qiang 2003). Knight & Stier (2004), claim that reasons leading to internationalization by higher education institutions have been categorized as academic (where emphasis lays on education and research) or economic (motivated to find ways leading to increasing revenues). It is also political motives, which intend to inspire leaders to draw actual opinions that lead to the development of the country and also religions motives that aim on spreading view on particular religious organizations. (Cited in Hawawini 2011.)

Similarly, Knight (1997), shares an analogous view in regards to the above and also adds cultural/social motives towards internationalization. The cultural/social rationale focuses on the importance of the role and position of their very own culture and language and also in the understanding of the significance of the foreign languages and their cultures as well.

Similarly in this globalized world, Finland needs to work through international cooperation to strengthen its national development. As comparative studies show that Finland being an active member in the European higher education and research cooperation, lacks internationality in its higher education, research and innovation system. There are insufficient international students, researchers and teachers in Finland and also not many resources are available in the development funding and research.

There is a decrease in the movement of students and researchers worldwide and Finland fails to attract the qualified professionals in the field of industrial production and technology. Whereas, even after possessing good education and research structure worldwide is evident that there is a lot to be achieved in the field of globalisation and internationalism. (Ministry of Education 2009.)

Therefore, it was essential for the establishment of a national strategy for the internationalization of higher education within the government plans, highlighting the growth in the mobility of international students, teachers and researcher. According to the strategy plan, the higher education institutions need a rapid adhere to the global changing dynamics and be able to make full use of the prospects brought by them. The strategy, which targets till 2015 has laid out aims of internationalization of higher education institutions to be achieved in the years ahead. The strategy is led by experts in the field of international higher education fraternity, with improved excellence desirability to assist for a multicultural environment. (Ministry of Education 2009.)

Therefore, in order to back up the strategies, plans and policies towards the internationalization of students, there are various English- taught programmes currently operating, mainly in the Polytechnic Universities and Universities as well. Finnish institutions provide over four hundred and fifty degree and non-degree programmes in English. All the lectures, books and tests of these international programmes are delivered in English. The non-degree programs make up for the exchange students as part of their exchange period of study, whereas the full time degree programs are for the regular students which can take several years to complete, leading to an official Finnish higher education bachelors, Masters or doctoral degree. (study in Finland.)

4.3 Higher Education in Finland

As Education, culture and knowledge are the main pillars of the Finnish welfare system; Finland has given utmost importance to education and follows a systematic formulated structure right from the first phase of education till the higher education.

The Finnish HEI's during the end of 1980's took major leap in international mobility, teaching and research. Initially, the institutions focused on student and teacher exchanges, which were designed to be reciprocal from the very start. In order to attract international students to Finland, the Finnish HEIs began to offer teaching through a foreign language, most notably English. (Garam 2012.)

The higher education policy is set up to adhere to the educational needs of the society and prepare enough number of highly educated professionals to meet the demands of the society and the labour market. The higher education policy objectives are under continuous development by adopting the Education and Research Development Plan, which is constructed on the education and science policy aims recorded in the Government Programme and Government's Strategy Document. (Finnish Higher Education Council 2010.)

The Finnish higher education system comprises two complementary sectors: universities and the professionally oriented universities of applied sciences (UAS), sometimes also known as polytechnics. Universities are responsible for conducting research and offer undergraduate teaching and postgraduate education based on it, whereas the aim of the UAS is to prepare professionals to work and serve the market demands and perform research and development in support of education and regional development. As per the agreement with the Bologna Deceleration, the Finnish higher education institutions are active participants in creating the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), and in order to cement its place within the EHEA, Finland reformed the university degree structure in 2005 to formulate the strategy for the internationalization of higher education institutions for 2009-2015. (Finnish Higher Education Council 2010.)

3.3 International Students as Part of Internationalization

According to Jude Carroll and Janette Ryan (2005), International students refer to students who travel to another country in order to pursue tertiary education. As mentioned above regarding the globalization and modernization, students travelling to

other countries for education have only grown over the years. Unlike before, it was next to impossible and a tough task for students to gain entrance to Western universities as the governments and scholarship providers evaluated and selected a few of the elite students who they believed would prosper. However, now the entrance examination of the universities, the student's own resources to afford the studies and the desire to gain higher education which often can be demanding, are the only restraining factors for students desiring to study in other countries.

Internationalization of higher education by institutions is another factor attracting students from different parts of the world to seek education. The universities are making it more accessible for desired students to choose universities, as the universities are making their study environment more acceptable and friendly for the international students. There are also various support systems put forward for the international students and an emphasis too has been laid on the multicultural aspect of the study place so that students feel comfort, lively and welcomed in the new environment. (Carroll & Ryan 2005.)

In this regard, the inclusion and direct involvement of international students is one of important aspects of internationalization process. Thus, with the new and modern methods towards developing education and relatively easier accessibility to the educational institutions, international students have travelled different parts of the world to seek education and also have an opportunity to live and work in the long run. (Carroll & Ryan 2005.)

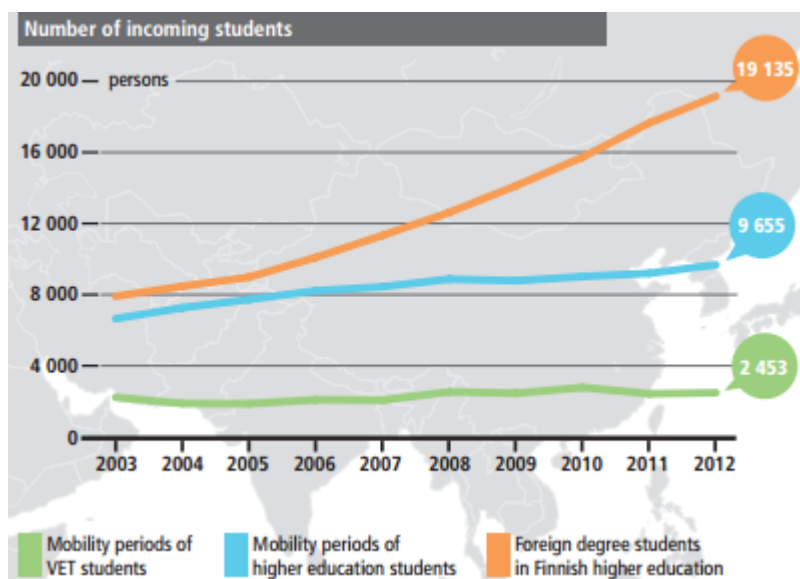
As mentioned in ‘Trends in International Student Mobility’:

International student recruitment is becoming integral to the financial health of many higher education institutions worldwide, in addition to remaining an important means of attracting talent and expanding campus diversity (WES 2012).

It is evident that students travel to more developed countries to study as it these countries that are equipped with the abundant resources including modern tools and strategies to attract students in their countries.

Therefore, due to the trends for the internationalisation of higher education, the number of international degree students in Finnish higher education institutions has been gradually increasing in recent years. According to CIMO (2013), the amount of outbound and incoming students in Finland has grown during the last decade. In 2012, the number of foreign degree students in Finnish higher education has more than doubled since 2003.

FIGURE 1. Number of incoming International Students



(Source: CIMO 2013)

Finland's long lasting success strategy is based on investing in the education sector and be able to maintain its efficiency. Assessments have shown that the high quality education and research system provides great strength and competitive edge. Educated workforce plays a vital role while competing in the market position and capital markets. Hence, creating new knowledge and skills in its implementation is seen as the upcoming accomplishments. (Ministry of Education 2009.)

To be well equipped with the changing world economy there is an utmost need to be familiar with the changing trends and hence the government has put forward a most inclusive structure to develop the higher education, research and innovative system. The purpose is to enrich the lives of the citizens, to compete with the changing economy and develop the creativity, education and culture. (Ministry of Education 2009.)

Hence, due to the above-mentioned reasons and the increasing trend in the student mobility, the Finland Ministry of Education created a national strategy for the internationalisation of higher education as part of a national plan. “The Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009–2015” lays out various goals and measures to be implemented and achieved through the process. (Ministry of Education 2009.)

4. HISTORY OF INTERNATIONALIZATION IN FINLAND

Hakala (1998), mentions that the first university was established in Turku in 1640 and due to its small population nearly all the teachers mainly travelled to Germany, as not many foreign scholars ventured into Finland, until recently. Although, Finland was a bilingual country speaking Finnish and Swedish, German language prevailed as the foreign language in the university. English started to rise as the significant foreign language as the society gained more knowledge through the years. (Cited in Clarke 1998.)

In the beginning of 1960s, Finnish experts started to plan and allocate funds in an efficient manner and new universities were established and the number of students rose influencing the traditionally elitist Finnish academic culture. It was only to the end of 1980's that few academicians visited Finland and few students travelled abroad to study, which was only prevalent amongst the highest designated academic professors. (Cited in Clarke 1998.)

Hopkin (1990), mentions that the Ministry of Education laid emphasis on increasing international exchange and researcher mobility. It was in 1988, out of 102,000 university students, 1200 were foreign students studying in Finland. (Cited in Clarke 1998.) This number has increased considerably over the years, as according to the latest statistics of CIMO (2013), the number of foreign students has risen to almost 20,000. Around 40 percent of the degree student's hail from Asia, which are nearly equal to the students who come from other European countries whereas 14.2 percent are from Africa, as mentioned in the table below.

TABLE 1. Nationalities by continent of foreign degree students in Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany in percentage

Nationalities by continent of foreign degree students in Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany, %				
	Finland 2012	Denmark 2011	Netherlands 2011/12	Germany 2011/12
Asia	40.9	10.0	20.4	34.4
Africa	14.2	2.1	2.9	10.1
North America	39.3	77.9	69.9	47.0
Latin America and the Caribbean	2.5	1.2	3.2	2.5
Oceania	2.4	1.1	3.2	5.5
Other/unknown	0.3	–*	0.3	0.3
	0.0	7.6	0.0	0.0

*Recorded as part of Asia

(Source: CIMO 2013)

In 1989, the Ministry of Education set out quantitative goals to enhance the mobility of students, and as Finland entered in the European Union Erasmus programme in 1991, it started the students exchange programmes in higher education. Initially, it was considered that a major obstacle for attracting foreign students into Finland was the language barrier. Hence, English-taught courses were introduced by the Finnish Higher Institutions to apprehend the needs of student exchange and in addition, Ministry of education also approved funds to the institutions to do so. Simultaneously, the International School of Social Sciences was established in 1990, at the University of Tampere to organize English language undergraduate programmes. Hence, the 1990's can be claimed as the beginning of education and training through foreign languages.

Since then, Internationalization has been a major focus and of strategic importance of the Finnish science and higher education policy. The long-term resources put in to the higher education and research and development programs have resulted in the growth of the higher education intuitions and research and also intensification in international cooperation. (Ministry of Education 2009.)

However, the increased internationalization and diversity of students in the Finnish education system is facing challenges as there is a risk for not being able to sustain the talent of the highly educated international students. Moreover, education has been traditionally designed for the uniform student body with national standards and policies. Therefore, due to ever-large scale migration there is an immense diversity of different social, linguistic, religious, and cultural realities amongst students in the schools and universities in Finland. (Toolkit for HEIs.)

Hence, there is a structural development of higher education system currently underway in Finland. According to the Strategy for the Internationalization of Higher Education Institutions in Finland 2009-2015, in spite of Finland being an active player in the European higher education and research cooperation, studies showed that there was a lack of internationality in the Finnish higher education, research and innovation system and also a lack of adequate teaching staff. To support the above, the Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, has established a goal to increase the number of international degree students to 20 000 by the year 2015. (Ministry of Education 2009.)

4.1 Finland towards Internationalization

Internationalisation has become a main highlight in the Finnish higher education policy, with the attention being laid out from student exchanges to hiring international degree students to Finland. The international talent with high quality education is viewed as a valuable link to a competitive nation by the Ministry of Education (2007; 2009). It is seen that the increasing demand in the developing countries for an international education has given rise to an international education market. (Cited in Garam 2012.)

There is an increasing focus on the importance of internationalization of Higher Education in Finland and there is an increasingly large share of the education packages offered in Finnish Universities and polytechnics taught in English as well. Centre for International Mobility and Cooperation (CIMO), established in 1991 aims at “promoting international cooperation and mobility in the Finnish society with specific emphasis on education, training, working life, culture and young people.”

It is independently run under the Ministry of Education and Culture and focuses on the enhancement of Internationalization of Finnish Society. (CIMO 2012.)

According to the International mobility in Finish higher education in 2012, Finnish students have attained international degree experience by partly studying abroad. Almost 10,000 Finnish higher education students travel to foreign countries as exchange students for practical work experience, which is up to 20 percent of the number of graduates each year. Also there are a many degree programmes taught in English in Finland, which is possible to study in a multicultural environment at home. (Gram 2012).

The main focus supporting internationalization in higher education is the international mobility of students. The students are entitled to a three months of studying or training abroad, in which students can choose to travel to different countries and universities to complete their study module and attain their credits in doing so. The mobility of students is a very dominant part of internationalization, which seems to overlook other issues of internationalization. However, challenges occur in the motivation and quality assurance of the students, as many institutes have place minimum set of credits needed to be completed during the mobility period and due to lack of proper supervision students do not know what courses to take up abroad and what to complete before the departure. (Gram 2012.)

The institutions provide intensive courses, summer schools and other short term modules which involve international activities all in one package. There is mobility and cooperation involved amongst the students and teachers forming a multicultural studying perspective. The intensive courses lead to internationalization by providing closer international cooperation not only within the HEI's but also in the local and regional level. Unfortunately, the lack of funding is a challenge to provide continuation to conduct these courses. (Gram 2012.)

Similarly, the Finnish students become more international, as many degrees are being taught in the English language, which leads to the integration between the Finnish and the international students.

This develops into a two way learning process, as the Finnish students gain experience of cross-cultural communication, the international students on the other hand become familiar with the host country. This, too, is seen as a challenge because the English and Finnish courses are taught separately and there is not much interaction between the two sides. This in turn leads both sides to be restricted to their own confinements, hampering the integration process. (Gram 2012.)

The above is an evidence of the internationalization process taking place amongst the HEI's but also there are hindrances that are present along the process which need to be looked into. Moreover, even the lack of motivation amongst the international students to learn the Finnish language along with the institutions unable to find space to add Finnish language into the curriculum, further impedes the internationalisation process (Gram 2012 1B). These factors in turn leave the international students feeling vulnerable to situations and have to face various challenges and struggles in their day to day activities including, at work.

4.2 Education Policies and Education System in Finland

Regarding the education policies and the education system in Finland, the Ministry of Education and Culture mentions:

One of the basic principles of Finnish education is that all people must have equal access to high-quality education and training. The key words in Finnish education policy are quality, efficiency, equity and internationalisation. In Finland everyone has the right to free basic education, including necessary equipment and text books, school transportation and meals. Post-compulsory education is also free: there are no tuition fees in general and vocational upper secondary education, in polytechnics or in universities. Education is primarily co-financed by the Government and local authorities. (Ministry of Education and Culture.)

The constitution states the basic right to education and culture to its citizens and all residents in Finland must be provided with equal opportunities by the public authorities in acquiring education even after compulsory schooling and in developing themselves, regardless of what their financial status is.

The education is free in Finland from the pre-primary stage to the higher education, with an exception of the adult education where fees may apply. The parliament is responsible for the decision on the contents of the legislations on education and research, which are depend on government proposals. The duty for preparing and executing education and science policies lie in the hands of the Government and the Ministry of Education. (Ministry of Education and Culture.)

The welfare of Finnish society is built on education, culture and knowledge (Ministry of Education, 2007a). There are equal opportunities provided for children to study and enhance their own knowledge according to their capacities, no matter from where they belong, what language they speak and what is their economic situation. All the students have access to a high-quality and a competent education learning system along with a safe and friendly learning environment and well-being. The basic secured educational provisions and an adaptable education system provide for an equal and uniformity in the results. (Ministry of Education and Culture.)

The Finnish basic education (comprehensive education) system comprises of nine years for children which progress by one year of voluntary pre-primary education. But, it is the upper secondary education that covers the general education, and vocational education and training along with further other specialized qualifications. Thereafter, the higher education comprises of two complimentary sectors, known as universities and the skilled-targeted universities of applied sciences, also defined as polytechnics. (Ministry of Education and Culture.)

The overall educational structure designed from the pre-primary education: basic education, upper secondary education and training along with the early childhood education and the extracurricular activities in and after school provides for a sound learning pathway for supporting the children's well-being. Likewise, students can always seek to pursue their upper level education no matter what they wish to do in between. The previous studied curriculum is always accepted, such is how the education system has been developed. Once a student completes one level of studies then he is always qualified for the next study levels. (Ministry of Education and Culture.)

There is also a provision for the adult education and is given at all levels of education and students can register for general education certificate or for a vocational qualification, or the modules mentioned within the given curriculum. They are also entitled to other courses related to the development of citizenship and work skills or continue with other recreational education. In order to pursue higher education in universities or polytechnics, the students need a second general or vocational diploma. (Ministry of Education and Culture.)

There is a decentralization of the education system in Finland with decision making authority and functioning of the schools lies in the hands of the local municipalities. At present according to Ministry sources in 2013, there were 320 municipalities in Finland. There is a decision making of lower secondary schools at the local level either by the local government or by the school, based on how the municipality wants to decide. It is within the local authorities where the decisions on how to distribute the funds, plan and implementing the local curriculum as well recruiting and also training personnel's takes place. Even the local representatives decide as well on how much independence the schools have. (Education Policy Outlook Finland, 2013.)

4.4 Higher Education Internationalization strategies in Finland

The aim of the strategy for the internationalisation of higher education in Finland 2009-2015 is "to create in Finland an internationally strong and attractive higher education institution and research community that promotes society's ability to function in an open international environment, supports the balanced development of a multicultural society and participates actively in solving global problems." Hence, according to the strategy, there are five primary aims set up to be accomplished by the year 2015.

The Finnish higher education needs to offer skills to thrive in an internationally functioning world market. A highly informative staff and international networks of the staff of the institutions will enhance the quality of education and research and assist the internationalization of the students.

Hence, there is a need for a genuine international higher education to be implemented and the aim is to see that by the end of 2015, there is an increase in the foreign teaching staffs, researchers and degree students. Also the higher education institutions will truly become international study and work environments. (Ministry of Education 2009.)

The higher education institutions are to become well known internationally and appealing places to study and work. The international students and researchers come to Finland for its high quality education provided in the institutions and the work related prospects offered in Finland. So, there is a need to increase the quality and attractiveness of higher education institutions and to brand the Finnish higher education institutions as more appealing for the international students. There is dependable cooperation amongst the international cooperation partners engaging in the enrichment of jointly valuable international education, research and cultural cooperation. (Ministry of Education 2009.)

The immigrant population with diverse backgrounds entering Finland as exchange student, degree students, teachers, researchers and other foreign nationals in the Finnish higher education institutions are a great source to endorse internationalisation within the locality. Thus, the aim of institutions is to develop a multicultural higher education community and civil society. Finally, the highly advanced skills attained in education and research at the Finnish higher education institutions aims at assisting students and researchers to increase their level of competence in solving problems in the developing countries. The institutions of higher education need to conduct activities morally workable and suited in the best interest of the students to sustain in the global environment and understand its outcomes. (Ministry of Education 2009.)

4.5 Degrees Conducted in English Language in Finland

The Finnish higher education institutions from late 1980's have made remarkable gains in international mobility, teaching and research. In the beginning there was mainly concentrated on the student and teacher exchange programmes but then to welcome international students, the Higher education institutions started to provide teaching through a foreign language, mainly in English. (CIMO 2009.)

The Finnish institutions offer more than 450 degree and non-degree programmes taught in English with all the lectures, books and tests provided in English (study in Finland). Accordingly in the Finnish higher education system there are two complementary sectors known as universities and the job-related educational programme known as University of Applied Sciences, which are also termed as polytechnics (CIMO 2009). Similarly, the Polytechnic degrees offer both Bachelor's as well as Master's degree, with around 100 Bachelor's degree programmes and over 20 Masters' degree programmes (Study in Finland 2014).

In the University sectors there are 14 universities operating at the moment under the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. Just as the University of Applied Sciences, the universities also conduct Bachelor's as well as Master's degree programmes. In the University sectors there are 14 universities operating at the moment under the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. The universities conduct Bachelor's as well as Master's degree programmes and post-graduate Licentiate and Doctoral degrees. There are nearly 200 Master's degree programmes in English offered by the Finnish universities and 23 special Doctoral programmes. (Study in Finland 2014.)

For further details, in order to search for the various English-language degree and non-degree programmes, information about Finland as a study destination, about its higher education institutions and possibilities regarding scholarships, admissions procedures and living in Finland can be found in the 'Study in Finland' website.

5 RESEARCH PROCESS

The study was a literature review on the internationalization of higher education in Finland and on the international students' living scenario and their employment challenges in Finland. I mainly intended to find out the various challenges faced by the international students while living and working in Finland. Therefore, a literature review was conducted by collecting the information from various resources; books and journals, government publications and official statistics, website pages and the internet. According to Hart (1998), literature review is defined as:

The selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfill certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed. (Cited in Flick 2011.)

In order to conduct the study, the information was gathered by visiting the libraries and accessing the internet from home. The key term used to commence my study was 'international students', many research related topics showed up and I selected the most appropriate resources regarding international students from the year 2009 to the year 2014. The reason behind the selection of the years was aimed at studying the life situations of the international students after the implementation of the Internationalization strategy in Finland. The findings of the literature review have been discussed and a conclusion provided on the scenario of the international students living and working challenges in Finland. Furthermore, recommendations regarding the issues have been mentioned as well.

By following this process, it remained cost effective and saved time in having to seek authorizations for appointments, hence avoiding ethical problems and providing less hassle than contacting people to get data. However, this type of study also has restrictions, especially when the researcher needs to obtain more crucial and sensitive data, which has restricted access in the public domain. (Denscombe 2003.)

Hence, it is wise to choose the type of process according to the availability of the data suitable for the study, which was my preference, as it suited my study and the availability of the information was easily accessible.

To conduct this research, I have gathered different documents that have similar themes related with my study topic and used them for my discussion. The following TABLE 2 provides the insight of the sources, database and the themes of the research.

TABLE 2. Database Tabulation

Author	Title	Publication details	Database	Theme
Chege Dorothy Nejeri	Encountering Differences: Study And Learning Environment Culture-Shock In Finland: (The Case Of Asian First Year International Students)	Diakonia University of Applied Sciences, Diak South, Järvenpää unit/2013	Publication theseus	International students, cultural shock, challenges in studies and integration
Ciulinaru, Dragos	Beyond Studies: Struggles and Opportunities Perspectives on International Student's Settlement in Finland	University of Helsinki, Career Services/2010	Google	International students, struggles and opportunities experiences, employability
Chukwu, Dominic-Savior C	Case study of some male migrant workers in Finnish facility	Diakonia University of Applied Sciences, Diak South, Järvenpää unit/2012	Google	International students, racism at employment
Heiskanen, Mari	Development of Group Dynamics and Cultural Competences in a Multicultural Study Group	Diakonia University of Applied Sciences, Diak South, Järvenpää unit/2012	Publication theseus	International students reasons to the limitations in social interaction
Liu, Mingxia & Ming, Gao	Challenges During The Studies Experienced By International Nursing Students	Kemi-Tornio University Of Applied Sciences/ 2012	Publication theseus	International students challenges
Majakulma, Arja	Enhancing the Employability of International Graduates during Education- A case study based on Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences	Laurea University of Applied Sciences/ 2011	Google	International students, employability challenges
Melikhova, Marina	Foreign Students At Rovaniemi University Of Applied Sciences	Rovaniemen ammattikorkeakoulu/2012	Publication theseus	International students, racism and challenges in work
Nieminen, Sarianne	Support Services for International Degree Students	Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences/2012	Publication theseus	International students, lack of support opportunities
Oluwafunmilola, Omodona Oluwakemi	Depression amongst International Students	Central Ostrobothnia University of Applied Sciences/2012	Publication theseus	International students, depression
Pehkonen, Minna	Pehkonen, Minna	Saimaa University of Applied Sciences/2010	Publication theseus	International students
Shumilova Yulia, Cia Yuzhuo & Pekkola Elias	Employability of International Graduates Educated in Finnish Higher Education Institutions	University of Helsinki/2010	Google	International students employability

After gathering information, the findings were listed in the discussion and a conclusion was made on the international students living scenario and there employment challenges whilst the implementation of the internationalization strategy of higher education in Finland. Furthermore, recommendations are listed to the concerned authorities to look into the issues highlighted in the discussions.

6 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' LIVING SCENARIOS

As the number of immigrant students increased in Finland, the cultural diversity has gained momentum and there is substantial transformation in the ethnic and cultural structures of Finnish society. Also there are various different challenges for the host country and the foreign students. According to Sandhu & Asrabadi (1994) "The challenges experienced by international students often trigger feelings of uneasiness, insecurity and loss. The accumulation of practical, cultural and social difficulties may result in acculturative stress, which is defined as the disorientation that often accompanies cross-cultural transitions" (cited in International Students' Personal and Multicultural Strengths: Reducing Acculturative Stress and Promoting Adjustment 2012, 216.)

Therefore, according to Dee & Henkin, (1999) understanding a new culture and operating in a new culture having different beliefs and values can be a problematic situation for International students inflicted on the International students (cited in Chege 2013). As mentioned by Doro (2013), the international student's face all sought of hardships and go through various problems of culture shock, language barrier, adjusting to a new pattern of learning, weather changes, financial and housing problems and a feeling of loneliness. Hence, due to a distance from family and friends, they feel loneliness. According to Oluwafunmilola (2012), international students get depressed due to cultural shock, language barrier, contrasting weather and loneliness.

There is a struggle to adapt to the new environment for the new comers, even for the ones who have some awareness before-hand of the new environment but even more difficult for the new comers who are ignorant and unknowingly feel that the new society functions like their own home country. The new comers clearly become lost in transition. The multiple effect of such unacquainted occurrences on cultural travellers overall has been termed as culture shock. Examples are found in Student sojourners. (Doro 2013.)

Also studies show that the international students face many other challenges and obstacles as they try to settle in the new society, amongst the most evident one is the inability of the students to speak the Finnish language, which deprives them in building social relationships with the locals, having uniform access to information and in entering the labour market. This in turn was an obstacle towards integration. Hence, as mentioned by Dragos Ciulinaru (2010), studying the Finnish language was crucial. According to Koivisto & Juusola 2008 & Niemelä 2009, the Finnish culture and language is the reason why the International students find it difficult to get familiar with the Finnish people. Further, Kinnunen 2003 and Koivisto & Juusola 2008 mention that there is a feeling of absence of integration amongst the Finnish and the English degree programmes. (Cited in Nieminen 2012.)

According to Sarianne Nieminen (2012), the international students lack opportunities to study the Finnish language, which is a crucial tool to assist students to integrate into the Finnish society as well as labour market. Although, according to Dragos Ciulinaru (2010), speaking in English with locals in the Helsinki area is sufficient for students to interact. However, there was a problem while handling more intricate situations like accessing information during a health emergency. As one of the students interviewed by him, reveals how frustrating experience it was while visiting the hospital and the feeling of misery on not having to be able to communicate in Finnish. Another student added that there was a proper managed information service for the Finnish students but not the same for the international student. He further goes on to say that students did not have enough time to learn the language due to the limitation of the time.

The Finnish language is also essential in order to get jobs in the labour market, even after graduating. Minna Pehkonen (2010) states, that the Finnish language taught in school was not sufficient enough to sustain in the work. In order to do placements the students need excessive self-effort or previous understanding of the Finnish language after the course taught in school. Finnish language seems difficult as spoken was different than the written language. Therefore, it was evident that that the students showed little interests in doing their placements, due to the language barrier.

Similarly, Dragos Ciulinarius (2010), also states similar reasons that the Finnish language taught in school was “insufficient” and the lectures were not adequately flexible and consumed a lot of time. Even the spoken Finnish was different than what students learned in school, which lead to demotivation amongst students.

In a study by Dorothy Njeri Chege (2013), on Asian students in Finland, majority of incoming students were from Asia and Africa, hence her study focused on the learning shock amongst them, as they arrive in Finland. She writes that the students are in a state of “disillusionment” where their expectations don’t match their preconceived thinking and certain factors hindering the progress of international student's success in learning in the higher education were language, culture, expectations and teaching and learning styles. (Chege 2013.)

Finland, being viewed as an individualistic culture, where the educational success is evaluated on the critical analysis and developing knowledge, which is an unfamiliar learning and teaching methods for the international students thus, causing difficulties in leaning methods. (Chege 2013.) As Oei & Notowidjojo (2010), mention that students undergo depression studying in an unfamiliar environment along with the school work getting too much to handle for them (cited in Oluwafunmilola 2012).

According to a study by Marina Melikhova (2012), amongst international students in Rovaniemi (UAS) also witnessed cultural shock on arrival to Finland. Also, she mentions that the students faced problems of language, individualism, silence of people and hurdles in making Finnish friends. Furthermore, According to Mari Heskinen's (2012), due to cultural stress, environmental changes, added work responsibilities and various assignments at school, limit social interactions. She further adds, that in regards to education, students wished for more practical work and need more self-supervision work along with more Finnish language classes at the university. Another issue pointed by Liu & Gao(2012), though teachers teach in English, there are times when it is difficult for both the teachers and also the students to understand each other. The reason being, that English is not a native language for many international students, even though they pass the English exams. Everyone has a different dialect and pronunciation and they must get familiar with the language.

Due to the more controlled and direct method of education system inherited by the Asian students, the new Western academic model of independent learning system in Finnish studies exerted more burden on the new students. The Asian students mainly, adaptive to their own traditional culture of conserving knowledge by memorizing and reflecting it by reproductive ability in the teaching approach, leaves them disoriented and disadvantage in class. Memorizing being a traditional way of studying amongst the Asian students is valued unlike questioning and criticizing is not part of the learning process. Hence, At the start of their studies the Asian students experience a clash of cultures while studying but do adaptive to it, only after an initial confusion and disorientation. (Chege 2013.)

One aspect of interactions with Finns was seen as different from the "friends at the university" and "day to day friends" as it could lead to insubstantial interactions. It was more likely for international student's to be with fellow co-national or international students. Chege (2013), further adds that students from similar nations wish to work together in groups as there is coherence in their language, culture and studying habits. As stated by Pruitt, 1978; Torbiorn, 1982 that everyday social contact with co-natives leads to general regulation and temporary satisfaction (cited in Chege 2013). Hence, the Finnish and non-Finnish students hardly mingle with each other, which again can be seen as a problem in integration for the international students.

Another important aspect to be mentioned is regarding various supports and services available in Finland which assist immigrants, known as Kansaneläkelaitos- The Social Insurance Institution of Finland or 'KELA'. However, unlike the Finnish students, the international students do not receive any financial aid from KELA, as mentioned by Kela, that for non-Finnish citizens to receive financial aid, they must hold a residence permit other than that of a student, e.g. Work, family ties or return migration (Kela). Hence, in order to receive the financial aid you need not be a student, which is simply an impossible situation for an international student to even hope for any such support. This is also one big problem faced by many international students as in order to meet the living expenses they have to work, hence adding extra stress to their lives, which can do on to affect their studies.

7 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' EMPLOYABILITY

This chapter explains the employment situations of international students, their experiences and challenges working in Finnish companies. Literature has been reviewed from the VALOA project (2012), which includes the employability of the graduated students. Likewise, from a report by Ciulinaru, Dragos (2010) and along with three published theses by Dominic 2012, Melikhova 2012, Majakulma 2011.

As according to one of the objectives of the strategy towards internationalization of Finnish higher education, is that the international education will be established as an export industry (Ministry of Education 2009). However, in a study by CIMO (2011a), the International Student Barometer indicates that employment and career are the utmost weakness of the Finnish higher education system. It is due to the fact that there are limited opportunities to learn the difficult language, the labour market is small and competitive and there is inconvenience in the residence permit bureaucracy (Shumilova, Cai & Pekkola 2012).

As mentioned above, there is a considerable increase in the population of international students in Finland, each year. As the numbers go high, and due to the small and competitive market, along with higher education attainment rate in the 25-34 year-olds' age group (Shumilova, Cai & Pekkola 2012), there is a challenge in finding job opportunities. Besides the challenges of the competitive labour market, the international students face obstacles caused due to insufficient Finnish language skills, as it is considered a decisive requisite for entering the Finnish labour market.

Similarly, even for finding a place for their internship was considered "hard" by students. Difficulties occurred in filling up forms, which were demanding and stressful. Above all, the employers did not accept non-Finnish speakers. (Ciulinaru 2010.) Even graduated students believed that knowledge of the domestic language was an obstacle in finding employment (Shumilova et.al 2012).

According to Dominic (2012), immigrant workers involved in cleaning jobs have witnessed exploitation at their workplaces, where the employers have gone against the labour laws and employment acts. Workers were employed without work contracts, some were handed contracts but without specifying the terms of agreement, which did not mention their privileges and rights at work. This in turn allows the employee to hold back certain benefits of the workers.

There has been a case where an employee was working on the same contract for three years and on approaching the employer to upgrade his contract, the employer stayed absent for some time. Furthermore, employers assigned more tasks to be completed within a less paid time, which is one of the common problems faced by migrant workers within cleaning companies in Finland. Also employees who did overtime were not paid accordingly on the hour basis but on a fixed amount allocated at the end of each month.

According to a study by Marina Melikhova (2012), amongst international students in Rovaniemi UAS, the concerns relating work were the lack of experience and Finnish language, along with issues of racism decreased the chances of getting work. As Dragos Ciulinarius (2010), also says that a few students experienced racial xenophobic remarks outside campus. As mentioned by one of the interviewees by Dominic (2012), that a Finnish person is handed with an easy job with sufficient time to complete it, however, if you happen to be a foreigner you get exploited.

A report by Vehaskari (2010), apart from the language acting as a barrier to find employment in Finland, other problems of restraining bureaucracy of the resident permit, lack of close professional contacts, challenging family integration and limited career opportunities (cited in Shumilova, Cai & Pekkola 2012). In addition, the Finnish employers display a negative attitude towards foreigners and attitudes take time to change. As Arja Majakulma (2011), states that regardless of all the enhancing qualities in seeking employment such as professional competence, completed degree, experience gained during education work, multicultural competence and foreign language skills, networks and job seeking skills, yet the attitudes of some employers were considered as a deterring factor.

Another problem that was brought to light was that Employers take the notion that foreigner's degree differed to that of Finnish students, and some also go on to feel that the studies of foreign students do not coincide with that of Finnish students (Shumilova et.al 2012). Hence, this also creates a stereotype in the minds of the employers, in turn hampering the chances of the international students in obtaining work.

8 CONCLUSION

According to Arja Majakulma (2011), from the higher education institutions' point of view, the motivations to recruit international students are: strengthening the internationalization of institutions, creating international learning environments, and improving the quality of education. During the VALOA project, it was interesting to notice that especially universities of applied sciences are already quite international, as they also have a lot of teaching staff with a non-Finnish background. Traditional universities have hired fewer non-native Finns from outside the Finnish borders (Toolkit for HEIs).

Also according to the statistical evidence, the inflow of international students has more than double since 2003. In 2003, the number of international students was about eight thousand, which has increased to considerable number of nineteen thousand one hundred and thirty five by 2012, (CIMO 2013). Hence, the above statement reflects a positive notion to the development in the Internationalization process of higher education in Finland. However, this report concludes that important aspects of well-being and employment related issues of international students seems to have been neglected.

One major hurdle that has deprived the international students to take advantage of the opportunity to settle in Finland, is the barrier caused due to the unfamiliarity of the Finnish language. It is seen the lack of Finnish language skills, obstructs all the aspects of living, working, studying and as whole integrating in the Finnish society and labour market. It is evident that Finnish language is essential in all job related prospects and with the hiring of young talented youth being as one of the main aspects of the internationalization policy of the higher education; language teaching is not enough (Shumilova et.al 2012).

There is still work related racism prevalent in Finland, as mentioned above and there is no support provided to the victims of such atrocity.

Such unfair practices and moreover lack of choice to quite work leave the international students' vulnerable at the hands of the employers. The insufficient knowledge of the language deprives them of strength to raise their voices as a result a there is a feeling of helplessness and neglect prevails in their minds. Therefore, such areas needed to be looked into by the HEI's and give more push to teaching the Finnish language as part of extra credits, which will motivate the students further in studying the language and regaining confidence and pride in the long run.

In a report by CIMO (2011A), the results by the International Student Barometer (an international survey in Finland, tracking the international students on how they choose their institutions, how happy they are about their studies, learning support, life and accommodation) points that integration supporting services like work and daily life activities are the main desires for students coming to Finland as they come to Finland to 'live', not only to do a degree of higher education. Studies reveal that there are restricted opportunities offered by HEI's in handling the everyday life in the Finnish society.

8.1 Recommendations

It is evidently seen from this study that the international students' well-being and employment opportunities have been lacked for the proper implementation of the strategy for the internationalisation of higher education in Finland; therefore these indicators should be taken into consideration.

Hence, there needs to be a recommendation made for the internationalization strategy to suggest other actors as well to assist in specific measures to help in integration. For example, it is important that HEI's work hand in hand with other authorities and regional actors to disseminate information to the students living in Finland regarding support services like housing, health care and employment.

Even the HEI's should pay more attention to the international students' physical as well as psychological wellbeing. The HEI's are needed to be able to provide a comfortable environment for the international students' and caters to their immediate needs.

Information regarding support services, assistance to work related matters, matters needing emotional attention and help need to be taken into consideration.

8.2 Professional Development

The entire work process from the beginning to the end of this study has been highly educational and full of knowledge. The thesis has provided me a great opportunity to make full use of the theory studied in Diak, into practical implementation while undergoing my theses study. I have gained adequate knowledge and use of the framework while formulating a theses proposal and eventually it led me to a proper implementation of the plans to conduct my research. By choosing literature review as the research process for my study, was informative as it guided me through the completion of my thesis. Hence, the entire research process helped me to go through various books and journals, records, newspapers and magazines, government publications and official statistics, website pages and the internet.

As an international student of social services, it was of great interest to look into the life situations of international students living and working in Finland. Thus, I chose the above topic as it provided a clear picture on the intention of my study and what it was pertaining to. I have gained a great deal of knowledge about my topic and also regarding the international students living and working situation in Finland and what challenges and struggles they go through despite the implementation of the international strategy since the year 2009.

Furthermore, I have gained immense confidence and professional knowledge to pursue my future studies with the conclusion of my theses. I have achieved the right professional skills in the field of research and its process and how to gather the useful data for the study. I have learnt to be able to manage time and keep up with the schedule and also coordinate with my supervisor, which has been a very significant part of my theses study. It was my supervisor's guidance and persistence that I was able to accomplish my thesis.

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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HEIs:	Higher Education Institutions
CIMO:	Center for International Mobility
EHEA:	European Higher Education Area
OECD:	Organisation for Economic co-operation and Development
UN:	United Nations
WES:	World Education Services